



# Committee on Homeland Security Democrats

## Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member

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### Thompson Announces Staff for House Homeland Security Committee Democrats

WASHINGTON— House Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) today announced the staff of the Democratic Office for the Committee.

**“I am pleased to introduce a staff that is comprised of a diverse, bright and talented compilation of people who have pledged to work tirelessly to ensure that our homeland is protected. Each of them is exceptional and brings great abilities to the Committee and is ready for the important challenges that lie ahead.”**

Leading the Committee as Staff Director is Jessica Herrera-Flanigan. Herrera-Flanigan served in the 108th Congress as Counsel to the Select Committee on Homeland Security, where she handled cybersecurity, critical infrastructure protection, privacy, and civil liberties issues. Previously, she served as Senior Counsel to the Computer Crime & Intellectual Property Section in the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice, where she headed a team of prosecutors responsible for pursuing hackers, virus writers, and other cybercriminals. She also spent several years practicing energy and communications law at the D.C. law firm Crowell & Moring LLP. A native of Port Arthur, Texas, Herrera-Flanigan holds a B.A. from Yale University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Sue Ramanathan, Chief Counsel and Deputy Staff Director, was Counsel to the Select Committee on Homeland Security during the last Congress where she handled border security and immigration issues. Prior to joining the Committee, Ramanathan served as Senior Policy Advisor and Counsel to Rep. Zoë Lofgren (D-CA). She also has worked for the American Bar Association, Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), and Senator Joseph I. Lieberman (D-CT). Ramanathan, originally from Cherry Hill, New Jersey, holds a B.A. from Rutgers College, a J.D. from Rutgers School of Law, and an LL.M in International and Comparative Law from Georgetown University Law Center.

Jennifer Porter Gore joined the Homeland Security Committee’s Democratic staff in May as Communications Director. She was previously the press secretary for the House Financial Services Committee and Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA). Gore has extensive campaign experience and worked on the coordinated campaign in Minnesota to elect Kerry-Edwards. Prior to working on the Hill she held several positions in Washington, D.C., associations including Manager of Public and Congressional Affairs for the Credit Union National Association. Gore has a B.A. in International Studies from The Johns Hopkins University and an M.A. in Communications from American University. A native of Hartford, Connecticut, she and her husband live in Maryland.

Todd Gee, Senior Policy Advisor and Counsel, previously worked as a political consultant and lobbyist in Mississippi and as a federal clerk in Portland, Oregon. Gee previously served as senior aide to Rep. Thompson for several years and holds a B.A. from The George Washington University and a J.D. from Tulane Law School. Gee is from Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Ryan Cast, Senior Advisor for Science & Technology, most recently served as the Geospatial Information Officer for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Assistant Chief, U.S. Border Patrol for Information Technology. He has more than 20 years of combined experience as a Technology Professional and Federal Law Enforcement Officer. Cast holds a B.S. from San Diego State University. Cast hails from St. Joseph, Missouri and Chicago, Illinois.

Cherri Branson, Counsel and Coordinator for the Subcommittee on Management, Integration and Oversight, previously served as Legislative Counsel for Rep. Ed Towns (D-NY), Legislative Director for Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), and as Counsel and Professional Staff to the House Committee on Government Reform. Branson holds a B.A. from Vassar College, a J.D. from Indiana University School of Law at Bloomington, and an LL.M. from Emory University School of Law. Branson is a native of Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

Tom Finan serves as Counsel and Coordinator for the Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment. Previously, he was an Assistant General Counsel with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Office of General Counsel, where he litigated civil matters on behalf of the FBI and FBI Special Agents. Finan, from Little Silver, New Jersey, holds a B.A. in American Government from the University of Virginia, and a J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School.

Jerry Ross serves as Professional Staff and Coordinator for the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Science, and Technology. Before joining the Committee he was the director of government affairs for the National Fire Protection Association. He is also the former legislative director for the Congressional Fire Services Institute. He holds a B.A. and an M.A. from the University of Southern Mississippi. Ross, originally from Brandon, Mississippi, is also a former professor at Northern Virginia Community College.

Allen Thompson, Professional Staff and Coordinator for Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Cybersecurity Subcommittee, previously served on the staff on the Select Committee on Homeland Security in the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress. Previously, he was an intelligence analyst at the U.S. Coast Guard Intelligence Coordination Center. Thompson has a B.S. in Government from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and an M.A. in Legislative Affairs from The George Washington University. He resides in Frederick, MD, with his wife Becca and son Tyson. Thompson is a native of East Lyme, Connecticut.

Chris Beck is Professional Staff and handles critical infrastructure issues, focusing on energy and financial security. He was previously a legislative assistant for Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Cybersecurity. A native of Billings, Montana, Beck holds a B.S. in physics, from Montana State University, and a Ph.D. in physics, Tufts University.

Carla Buckner, Counsel, handles cybersecurity and related issues. Prior to joining the Select Committee on Homeland Security in June 2003, she coordinated U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski's (D-MD) technology agenda and homeland security issues, and managed matters

before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Homeland Security and Commerce-Justice-State. Buckner, originally from Austin, Texas, holds a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin and a J.D. from St. Mary's University School of Law.

Rosaline Cohen, Counsel, handles aviation security, budget and human capital issues. Prior to joining the Committee on Homeland Security staff, Cohen was Legislative Counsel/Director to Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY), a member of the Select Committee during the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress. Cohen holds a B.A. from The Elliot School of International Affairs at The George Washington University and a J.D. from the University of Houston Law Center. She is a native of Randolph, Massachusetts.

Josh Magarik serves as Legislative Assistant to the Committee, focusing on issues relating to emergency preparedness, port security, and aviation. Magarik served as the Executive Director and Staff Assistant of the Select Committee on Homeland Security during the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress. Magarik has a B.S. in Marketing & Management and Economics from Siena College. Magarik is from Vestal, New York.

Nadra Harrison, Press Assistant, was previously the Assistant Operations Manager for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) for the 2004 election cycle. Prior to working for the DCCC, Harrison was as a staff assistant and deputy press secretary for Rep. William J. Jefferson (D-LA). She received a B.A. in Broadcast Journalism from Northwestern State University. Harrison is a native of New Orleans, Louisiana.

Kandis Gibson serves as Staff Assistant for the Democratic Staff. She also works as an assistant on Management and Oversight issues. Prior to joining staff, she served as the Executive Assistant to the Director for America's Families United, Voter Protection Project under Penda Hair and Juan Marcos Vilar working on voter registration and voter protection issues during the 2004 election cycle. Kandis holds a B.A. from Cornell University and is a native of Auburn, New York.

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